

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00350 230821Z

12

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 L-02

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 SAJ-01

NIC-01 /081 W

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R 230750Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2031

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 0350

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PINT, KU

SUBJECT: SOVIET LABOR CONTACTS IN KUWAIT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 0246 (B) STATE 4268 (C) MANAMA 066 (D) KUWAIT 3696

1. RECENT VISIT REGIONAL LABOR ATTACHE GAVE NEW EMBASSY LRO
OPPORTUNITY LOOK INTO QUESTION SOVIET CONTACTS WITH LOCAL LABOR
MOVEMENT WITH SEVERAL MANAGEMENT AND UNION OFFICIALS. EMBASSY
LRO ALSO EXCHANGED VIEWS WITH U.S. EMBASSY ON SUBJECT. OUR
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 00350 230821Z

ASSESSMENT IS THAT, WHILE RECENT VISIT SOVIET SECRETARY OF

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF OIL, CHEMICAL, AND GAS WORKERS WAS SIGNIFICANT EVENT, IT MUST BE PUT IN PERSPECTIVE AS PART OF ONGOING SOVIET EFFORT TO CULTIVATE KUWAIT LABOR MOVEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN OIL AND PETROCHEMICAL FIELDS. ALTHOUGH OUR EVIDENCE FAR FROM EXACT OR CONCLUSIVE, IT OUR UNDERSTANDING SEVERAL LOCAL UNION OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IN SOVIET UNION FOR TRAINING AND THAT, AT IRREGULAR INTERVALS, SOVIET LABOR OFFICIALS HAVE VISITED THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN KUWAIT.

2. GENERALLY, IT APPEARS TO US THAT SOVIETS CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-STEP TOO FAR THEIR BOUNDS IN KUWAIT BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO ENTERING INTO OR EXPANDING THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER GULF ARABS AND MOST PARTICULARLY SAUDI ARABIA. IN ANY EVENT, MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT IRAQIS NOW MOST IMPORTANT OUTSIDE FORCE TRYING TO INFLUENCE EVOLUTION OF KUWAITI UNIONS, APPARENTLY HAVING REPLACED EGYPTIANS.

3. REGARDING U.S. STRATEGY TOWARD SOVIET MOVES, WE BELIEVE PREDILECTION KUWAITI UNIONS HAVE FOR RADICAL ARAB LABOR MOVEMENT AND EAST BLOC IS BASED MORE ON EARLY TUTORING AND APPRECIATION FOR EAST BLOC STANDS ON ARAB ISSUES SUCH AS ARAB-ISRAELI AND OIL PRICE DISPUTES RATHER THAN ON ANY STRONG IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION OR CONVICTION. MOREOVER, THE LOCAL LABOR MOVEMENT HAS NOT HERETOFORE RECEIVED NEARLY THE SAME LEVEL OF ATTENTION FROM THE U.S. OR OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES THEY HAVE FROM SOVIETS AND THEIR FRIENDS. THUS, IN SPITE OF BASIC CONSERVATISM OF BEDU DOMINATED RANK AND FILE MEMBERSHIP ON RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND OTHER ISSUES, IT PLAIN THAT PRESENT KUWAITI UNION LEADERS FIND IT EASIER POLITICALLY TO ALIGN THEMSELVES SOMEWHAT WITH EAST BLOC AND SOVIETS BECAUSE OF THEIR POLITICAL STANDS AND WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IMMEDIATELY EMBRACE ANY OVERTURES WE OR U.S. UNIONS MIGHT MAKE TO THEM.

4. BELIEVE BEST APPROACH FOR US TO TAKE AT PRESENT IS POSITIVE AND LOW KEY EXPRESSION OF INTEREST WITH EVENTUAL GOAL OF INVOLVING KUWAITIS IN SOME CONTACTS WITH FREE WORLD LABOR MOVEMENT AND CHANGING TO SOME DEGREE THEIR PRESENT ATTITUDES TOWARD WESTERN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. TO THIS END WE MORE THAN WILLING TO PROMOTE PROGRAMS OUTLINED REF B, BUT IDEALLY BELIEVE IT PREFERABLE THAT DIRECT CONTACTS TAKE PLACE BETWEEN APPROPRIATE U.S. AND KUWAITI UNIONS. IN ANY CASE, AS EVIDENCED BY DIFFICULTIES WE ENCOUNTERED

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PAGE 03 KUWAIT 00350 230821Z

SEEING UNIONS WHILE REGIONAL LABOR OFFICER HERE AND SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES U.K. EMBASSY TELLS US THEY HAVE RUN INTO, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WILL NECESSARILY BE AN EASY TASK AND ARE DUBIOUS THAT ANY MEANINGFUL CANDIDATES FOR PROGRAMMING SUGGESTED REF B WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN NEAR TERM. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE NOT YET INFLUENTIAL LABOR MOVEMENT LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO EVOLVE INTO POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL AND SOCIAL FORCE IN KUWAIT WHICH WORTHY OUR EFFORTS AND SCRUTINY.

5. MORE COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE ON LABOR MOVEMENT IN KUWAIT WILL
FOLLOW.
STOLTZFUS

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